



AN ASSOCIATION OF
MONTANA HEALTH
CARE PROVIDERS

EXHIBIT 2 BUH
DATE 2-20-09
HJ 25

Testimony in Support of **HJ 25**
House Human Services Committee

Study to Examine Issues Related to the Determination of Medicaid
Eligibility for Nursing Home Care

MHA...An Association of Montana Health Care Providers supports passage of HJ 25, a bill that requests the Department of Public Health and Human Services to collaborate with interested stakeholders to look at the difficulties encountered by nursing facilities and their residents seeking medical assistance eligibility.

In addition to hospitals, MHA represents not-for-profit nursing homes across Montana. It is not uncommon for us to receive calls from beleaguered nursing home administrators or social workers who are at a loss as to what kind of further assistance they can offer their residents and/or families who are struggling to attain Medicaid eligibility for a nursing home stay.

The Medicaid eligibility process is complex and time consuming for any applicant. The application itself is 15 pages long, full of acronyms and small print, and requires much additional documentation that may be impossible for some people to find. As someone who works with older folks both professionally and personally, this is the worst kind of nightmare for anyone who needs something in a timely manner—and it is virtually impossible to do without assistance.

Since Medicaid payments make up 60% of a nursing facility's reimbursement, it is critical that the process is fluid, timely, and responsible. Waiting for months on end to receive an eligibility determination can severely impede a provider's ability to deliver appropriate services. This is a unique situation that is not experienced by non-health care providers in such a defining way.

MHA believes there is a better way to move our elders through this process, and is committed to working with the department and the other stakeholders to determine what this might be. It can be a win-win situation for DPHHS, their Offices of Public Assistance, the Medicaid recipients and their families, and the providers.

We thank the committee for considering this proposal, and the time and attention you are giving to this important issue.

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